UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
15th meeting
held on
Thursday, 20 October 1994
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KHAN (Pakistan)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/49/SR.15
7 November 1994
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

94-81740 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/49/223-E/1994/105, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/229, A/49/256, A/49/287-S/1994/894, A/49/307-S/1994/958, A/49/381, A/49/462 and Corr.1, A/49/479)

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/49/463)

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1. Mr. PONIKIEWSKI (Poland) said that many delegations feared that the spirit of the Rio Conference was fading away. It was therefore of paramount importance for the Commission on Sustainable Development - the most important institution for the successful follow-up of the Conference - to maintain the highest possible profile, and to maintain a high-level political component in its work and broaden participation in it. His delegation fully supported the proposal by the Chairman of the Commission that other ministers and, in particular, ministers of finance should also participate in the work of the Commission. It also agreed with the comment made by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union that the Commission on Sustainable Development must maintain an active dialogue and an integrated approach to the basic issues of sustainable development.

2. National sustainable development strategies and action plans and national reports presented to the Commission continued to be valuable instruments for monitoring the implementation of the Rio commitments. They should also serve to improve the exchange of information on the experience acquired by various countries, and on the policies and instruments employed and their results. That was particularly important because many countries lacked experience in that regard. Poland was particularly interested in information concerning eco-labelling, green auditing, energy auditing, recycling and taxation.

3. Related to that was another politically sensitive issue: the elaboration of sustainable development indicators. Many argued that the implementation of the Rio commitments could be easily measured in terms of financial flows. In that connection, he wished to point out that the resources contributed were not nearly sufficient to cover the estimated costs. However, the conclusion of the negotiations on the new instrument for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which would become a universal facility, was a positive step.

4. The transfer of technology, which was more complex, was not as easy to measure. A more focused approach to the question was therefore required. To

that end, the dissemination of information must be greatly improved. His delegation hoped that the United Nations system would be able to formulate more specific proposals which would draw a response from countries in a position to transfer environmentally sound technologies. His delegation was prepared to cooperate in that endeavour.

5. Lastly, his delegation welcomed the fact that, in 1994, the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States had been adopted and the drafting of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa had been finalized. That constituted a major stride in the implementation of the Rio commitments.

6. Mr. BURHAN (Turkey) commended the Commission on Sustainable Development for the work it had done to implement the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and for its efforts to establish an effective follow-up mechanism for its own decisions. Obviously, national, regional and international efforts must be pooled in order to achieve the UNCED objectives. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the adoption of the new instrument for the restructuring and replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which had a major role to play in achieving those objectives. His delegation would continue to provide financial support of about 4 million special drawing rights to the Global Environment Facility in its new phase.

7. Regional activities in connection with the implementation of Agenda 21 were extremely important. In that context, he pointed out that the contracting parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution had decided to prepare an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean region. Furthermore, Turkey was preparing another Agenda 21 with the cooperation of the central Asian republics and the Balkan countries, in which context it had hosted the first meeting of Ministers of Environment of the central Asian republics and Balkan countries, held on 4 and 5 July 1994. At the close of the meeting, an appeal had been issued to the Heads of State and Government of the international community, requesting their help in solving the region's environmental problems, and the Ministers present had adopted a declaration reaffirming their determination to solve those problems. His delegation urged all international financial and other organizations, in particular the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank, to lend their full support to those regional efforts, which were vital to the achievement of global objectives.

8. His delegation welcomed the opening for signature of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, which it had ratified on 14 October 1994 in Paris. It also welcomed the inclusion of an annex on implementation of the Convention in the northern Mediterranean region.

9. Mr. BASMAJIEV (Bulgaria) expressed his country's satisfaction at the positive results achieved in the implementation of the decisions of the Earth Summit; none the less, much remained to be done in that regard. It was particularly important to continue the efforts aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the Commission on Sustainable Development in order to resolve the most pressing issues, particularly in the area of financial resources, the transfer of environmentally sound technology and cross-sectoral issues.

10. The involvement of other international organizations and specialized agencies from the United Nations system in the follow-up process of the Rio commitments was important. He stressed the need to strengthen regional and bilateral cooperation. In that connection, his delegation attached particular importance to the ministerial conference on environment and sustainable development of the European countries, to be held at Sofia in autumn 1995.

11. Bulgaria believing that the success of the Earth Summit would depend largely on action taken at the national level. It was therefore transforming its environmental and socio-economic policies into an overall strategy for achieving sustainable development, which would stress institution-building and national capacity-building. It had established a National Nature Conservation Service, National Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development under the Ministry of Environment, and an Inter-institutional Committee for Priority Environmental Projects and Development under the authority of the Prime Minister as a prototype of the future National Council for Sustainable Development. With assistance from the World Bank, it had updated its national action plan to the year 2000, and was drafting a framework law on biological diversity and formulating special programmes for reducing sulphur and nitrogen oxide emissions and greenhouse gas emissions.

12. Bulgaria was, however, experiencing serious difficulties in implementing its national programmes owing to insufficient financial resources and the negative impact of a number of external factors. The mobilizing of adequate financial resources for the implementation of the Rio commitments should therefore be one of the most important tasks of the international community. The restructuring and replenishment of the Global Environment Facility was a major achievement in that regard. His delegation was also of the view that national Governments should promote environmental policies and economic mechanisms aimed at utilizing all potential available resources. In that connection, Bulgaria was pursuing a policy of decentralization which enlarged the role of the local authorities and separate economic entities in the implementation of environmental projects. As a country faced with serious economic difficulties and a heavy external debt burden, Bulgaria supported the proposals for debt relief and, in particular, the principle of debt-for-nature swaps. It had submitted a debt-for-nature swap proposal to the Consultative Group of the World Bank.

13. Lastly, Bulgaria recognized that the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and national capacity-building in the sphere of environmental protection were of paramount importance for the incorporation of the environmental dimension into the overall process of development. However, it

lacked sufficient funding for research and development and for the purchase of high technology products and urgently needed wider access to high technology products on a concessional (grants, soft loans) basis. At the same time, it also had highly qualified scientific personnel. That potential could be more efficiently used within the scope of United Nations activities in the field of science and technology for environmentally sound development.

14. Mr. SAMANA (Papua New Guinea) said that the subject of the environment and sustainable development was of vital importance to all nations from the perspective of, firstly, the indiscriminate depletion of natural resources and global pollution, which would lead to serious degradation of the regional and global environment, and, secondly, the destruction of the habitat, housing Earth's biological resources, which inhibited the attainment of sustainable development in the long term.

15. Papua New Guinea was of the view that the conservation of biological diversity was an important aspect of sustainable development. There was a growing realization that bio-diversity was a resource which must be conserved, managed and developed in a manner that might open up further opportunities. Without a comprehensive policy on natural resource exploitation, developing countries in need of revenues might be blindly destroying habitats which housed valuable genetic resources that would provide unique potential for the future development of agriculture and agro-industrial products, including pharmaceutics.

16. The best way to protect the Earth's biological resources, a task that was fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development, was by promoting international cooperation and a greater awareness among Governments and peoples so that they would make conscious and responsible decisions that catered to the needs of future generations. Papua New Guinea had actively participated in many international and regional forums, such as the Intergovernmental Working Group on Global Forests, held at Ottawa (Canada), and would continue to support efforts to establish an internationally accepted definition of the concept of "sustainable forest management". In addition, the Melanesian spearhead group, which consisted of Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, had met earlier that year and had endorsed a tripartite declaration on natural forest management, which was also a major theme of the recent Heads of Government Meeting of the South Pacific Forum, held at Brisbane (Australia).

17. With regard to fisheries, Papua New Guinea had always played an active role in the work of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, which had also benefited from the work done by the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency.

18. Finally, Papua New Guinea strongly endorsed the South Pacific Forum's decision to oppose the dumping of nuclear waste in the Pacific Ocean, the establishment of facilities for the storage or incineration of such waste, as well as transboundary movements of toxic waste and nuclear testing in the region. In that connection, it sympathized with the Marshall Islands, a neighbouring country whose population suffered from the effects of past nuclear

testing, and would continue to work with that and other neighbouring countries in order to prevent the establishment in the region of storage facilities for hazardous wastes.

19. Mr. KALPAGÉ (Sri Lanka) said that, since the Rio Conference, some progress had been made towards the achievement of sustainable development, but not as much as had been hoped. Progress had been limited to the conclusion of the follow-up conferences and the recommendations of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its previous two sessions. Moreover, the developing countries had not implemented those recommendations, since they had not received any financial or technical assistance and, in general, the developed countries, owing to a lack of political will, had failed to address the problem of overconsumption and inappropriate production technologies.

20. However, the funds and technology that had been committed at Rio were crucial to the implementation by the developing countries of Agenda 21 and the activities of the follow-up conferences. The flow of resources for sustainable development in the South, especially private sector financial flows, must be encouraged and the Commission on Sustainable Development and other institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and United Nations agencies, should establish linkages in order to create a supportive environment for the implementation of Agenda 21.

21. Sri Lanka considered that trade was a means of mobilizing the resources needed by developing countries to implement Agenda 21 and therefore advocated a fair and open trading system. In that connection, the Commission on Sustainable Development could ensure that such a system was implemented and could also promote interim measures, such as a review of the Generalized System of Preferences, to help those developing countries which were adversely affected by the abolition of the System. In order to fulfil those objectives, the Commission should maintain linkages with the World Trade Organization.

22. Sri Lanka welcomed the International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, but cautioned the international community that it should support the efforts of those countries to overcome the problem of desertification. It also supported the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and hoped that the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks would establish a fair regime in the high seas for the sustainable management of marine resources. That new regime, to be established within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, should be implemented by having recourse to regional organizations, such as the Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Cooperation Conference.

23. Sri Lanka was convinced that sustainable development could be achieved only if the international community gave high priority to the problems of poverty and unemployment and that addressing those problems required the formulation of a new strategy. The Commission on Sustainable Development could be the forum in which to formulate a multi-pronged strategy to support the efforts of developing

countries to remove constraints, such as the lack of resources, technology, capacity and access to markets, and also to resolve the problem of low commodity prices.

24. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that the gap between the rich and poor, mass poverty and starvation were still greater threats to universal peace and a stronger affront to man's dignity than ecological problems. The international community should therefore reconcile development with the preservation of man's natural legacy. Israel faced the future with the certitude that protection of the environment was not contrary to development and that the two concepts were integrated.

25. The international community should therefore continue its cooperation on matters related to the environment and sustainable development in order to implement the recommendations of Agenda 21. The primary forum for such cooperation should be the Commission on Sustainable Development and Israel welcomed the Commission's efforts to enhance the activities of Agenda 21 at the national, regional and interregional levels and to achieve sustainable development in all countries. The Commission should also provide an intergovernmental forum for the exchange of information on national and multilateral experiences. In that respect, Israel was of the view that, at the following session of the Commission, interested parties should discuss the formulation and application of national strategies for sustainable development. It was important for the United Nations to maintain a balance between environment- and development-related issues and programmes. The Rio Conference, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the International Conference on Population and Development, the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development to be held at Copenhagen, and the various conventions, such as the International Convention to Combat Desertification, constituted the basis for developing a global strategy aimed at ensuring a better future for humankind. Israel urged the international community to strengthen the capability of the Global Environment Facility to finance programmes for the protection of the environment, in the execution of which UNDP, UNEP and other United Nations agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations had an important role to play.

26. Technology was a key element in sustainable development and it should be adaptable to the specific needs of developing countries. That was why research in Israel focused on the use of water resources and the desalination of sea water and brackish water in the desert. The Middle East possessed vast desert land and meagre water resources but the appropriate technology was available to turn the desert into fertile land. Israel invited all countries, particularly its neighbours in the Middle East, to join in its research work and to help in finding solutions to the problem of desertification. In cooperation with Japan, Israel would be convening an international seminar on land and water management. The human factor was also very important to development and the international community must therefore direct increased attention to the development of human resources, which in Israel had become the key to technological expansion and to technical and economic cooperation with other countries.

27. Regional cooperation was an essential element for the implementation of environmental protection programmes. For that reason, in the multilateral talks within the framework of the Middle East peace process, projects for regional cooperation in the areas of environmental protection and development were being formulated. In that connection, the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, the multilateral negotiations and the Casablanca conference would help to promote regional cooperation. It was to be hoped that peace would also be established in all the neighbouring countries so that all efforts and resources could be devoted to environmental protection and sustainable development.

28. Mrs. DAUD IBRAHIM (Indonesia) said that, since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/190, important intergovernmental activities had taken place, such as the meetings of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the negotiations on the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification, the Barbados Conference and the negotiations at the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. Like those activities, the second United Nations conference on human settlements (Habitat II), scheduled to be held in 1996, would help to implement the recommendations of Agenda 21.

29. The problems associated with straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks should be settled as soon as possible. In that connection, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had agreed to convene an intergovernmental conference to promote the implementation of the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and General Assembly resolution 47/192 had set the intergovernmental negotiating process in motion. Thus, the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks had been convened and charged with adopting measures to address such problems as the inadequate management of fishing on the high seas, the over-exploitation of certain stocks, unregulated fishing, excessive fleet size, insufficient selection of gear and, more importantly, the lack of cooperation between States. One of those measures, a draft agreement drawn up at the fourth session of the Conference, would serve as a basis for future negotiations on the question. Since the Conference had not completed its work, two additional preparatory sessions should be held in 1995.

30. She urged the international community to implement the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and create an economic environment conducive to the achievement of the Conference's goals. Since progress in sustainable development was a precondition for a meaningful contribution by developing countries to the preservation of the global environment, the international community must provide sufficient resources and appropriate technology to fulfil the commitments undertaken at the Rio Conference. It was to be hoped that greater attention would be focused on those issues when an overall review and appraisal of Agenda 21 was conducted in 1997.

31. As an archipelagic State with the longest coastline in the world, Indonesia was deeply concerned about the effects of both global warming and the rise in the sealevel. It therefore supported the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and would do its utmost to ensure the success of the first

session of the Conference of the Parties scheduled to take place in Berlin in 1995.

32. Mr. KING (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that in considering the draft agreement proposed by the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, the Committee should be mindful of the background to the original initiative taken by the international community in response to a sharp decline in fish stocks world wide. The entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on 16 November 1994 should strengthen the legal foundation on which the Conference was built. The Caribbean Community was convinced that the dual regimes for the exclusive economic zone and the high seas established by the Convention remained valid and should not be a subject for negotiation during the deliberations of the Conference. Members of CARICOM were also of the view that the draft agreement for the conservation of fish stocks and for the sustainable exploitation of high-seas fisheries represented a timely initiative and they were gratified that the precautionary approach was a common thread running throughout the agreement. The successful application of the precautionary approach would be dependent on the commitment of members of the international community to support responsible fishing without waiting for the agreement to be adopted.

33. All States should participate actively in the Conference so that the outcome would reflect a global consensus within the framework established by the Convention on the Law of the Sea. Developing countries should also receive adequate support in order to ensure that they were able to participate actively in the proceedings of the Conference and that they had the capacity to implement the outcome. The Caribbean Community would state its position on the substantive issues at the next session of the Conference. As far as procedural matters were concerned, it was of the view that the proposal for two additional sessions should be endorsed so that the Conference could complete its important work.

34. Mrs. CARAYANIDES (Australia), speaking on behalf of the nine States members of the South Pacific Forum that were also Members of the United Nations, said that the Forum had adopted an unprecedented range of measures to promote sustainable development and environmental protection and to improve revenue returns to Forum island countries from their resources. It had also established a regional consultative mechanism to coordinate the implementation of the sustainable development of small island developing States. The Forum had also condemned the international trade in endangered species and welcomed the establishment by the International Whaling Commission of the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary. The Forum stressed the importance of providing the opportunity for countries in the region to participate in inter-sessional meetings related to environmental issues of relevance to them and urged States hosting such meetings to ensure openness and transparency in organizing them.

35. The effects of climate change, the rise in the sealevel and climate variables were of critical concern to the countries of the South Pacific region. In August 1994, the heads of Government of the South Pacific Forum countries had

stressed that global warming and the rise in the sealevel were among the most serious threats to the region and to the survival of small island States. Members of the Forum urged other countries to share in their commitment to promote the prompt implementation and strengthening of the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

36. The United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks was of great significance to the countries of the South Pacific region since fish were a vital part of their diet and their economies. For some of those countries, fish represented the most significant opportunity for future economic development. The Forum felt that the Conference should produce a legally binding instrument that would provide for the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. The Forum also fully supported the decision to convene two further sessions in 1995 in order to enable the Conference to complete its work.

37. The countries of the South Pacific region attached great importance to the full implementation of the global moratorium on all large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing. They had taken measures to that end, both individually and collectively, for instance, the Convention on the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Drift Nets in the South Pacific. They appreciated the considerable efforts made by some distant-water-fishing nations, such as Japan and the Republic of Korea, and invited all the remaining countries of the Asia and Pacific region, as well as distant-water-fishing States to sign the Convention or its Protocols without delay. Although that destructive fishing practice no longer prevailed in the region as a result of the initiative of the South Pacific countries and because of the cooperation shown by States which fished in the region, the Forum was deeply concerned by reports that it might be continuing in other parts of the world. Accordingly, they requested the Secretary-General to continue to compile information on the nature and effectiveness of measures employed by States to ensure the implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/215, and urged all members of the international community to implement the resolution and to report to the Secretary-General any activity or conduct inconsistent with its terms.

38. Mr. HLA MAUNG (Myanmar) said that he was heartened to note that the Commission on Sustainable Development had launched an integrated review of the progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21 and other outcomes of the Conference on Environment and Development at the national, regional and international levels. Agenda 21 underlined the fact that humanity stood at a crossroads: either the economic gap within and between countries could be allowed to widen and the ecosystem on which the whole world depended could continue to deteriorate, or policies could be adopted to ensure both environmental protection and economic development.

39. The Asia and Pacific region was composed of a large number of nations differing in size, demographic pattern, natural resources and level of development. While it was true that the region as a whole had registered remarkable successes in recent years and that high growth rates were more the norm than the exception, environmental conditions had deteriorated in many

countries, largely as a result of poverty and underdevelopment. Alleviating poverty, therefore, was no longer simply a moral issue, but a practical imperative. Degradation of the land, forests and oceans would continue as long as increasing numbers of citizens of developing countries were compelled to exploit the environment for their survival. In Myanmar, as in many other countries of the region, the source of the problem did not lie in industrial development or unsustainable lifestyles. For that reason, the Agenda 21 proposals on a wide range of policies - population, health care, education, women and youth - were being taken seriously at the national level. The Government of Myanmar was giving priority to activities to combat poverty, particularly in the mountainous border areas. Modern methods of agriculture were being introduced and industrial plants were equipped to neutralize the harmful effect of effluents and wastes on the environment. The Government continually monitored the situation with regard to the exploitation of forest resources to ensure their sustainability. In keeping with the proposals in chapter 11 of Agenda 21, it had been working to conserve existing forests and to expand areas under forest cover, particularly in mountain areas, dry and semi-arid zones and coastal areas where mangrove forests thrived.

40. In order to implement environmental policies effectively, the Government had, in February 1990, formed a national commission to coordinate environmental matters internally and to deal with foreign institutions and international organizations in the field. That commission and the Ministry of Forestry had jointly sponsored an ESCAP/UNEP regional seminar on the people's participation in mangrove rehabilitation and management, which had been held in February 1994.

41. In reviewing the results obtained since the Rio Conference, it should be noted that, while some new ideas had been proposed (for example, green taxes) and some innovative approaches had been discussed in the Commission on Sustainable Development, the funds promised for the implementation of Agenda 21 had not materialized. Meanwhile, the developed countries, with less than 25 per cent of the world's population, consumed more than 75 per cent of its raw materials. The developed countries and the developing countries must work in partnership, and technical assistance and environmentally sound technology must be supplied to the developing countries on non-commercial and preferential terms in order for them to achieve sustainable development. The attainment of that goal required the participation not only of Governments, but also of organizations and individuals. Greater awareness of environmental issues at the grass-roots level was therefore needed, as noted in chapter 36 of Agenda 21.

42. Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan) noted the progress achieved in the implementation of the commitments made at the Rio Conference, especially the signing of the International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particulary in Africa, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the forthcoming first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the second session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, at which the Commission had adopted a significant body of decisions regarding its programme of work. At that second session of the Commission, his delegation had expressed its concern that interest in global

environmental issues was waning within the international community, particularly in the mass media, and had stressed that it was essential for the Commission to have the necessary political support to address the major issues in the area of sustainable development. One way for the Commission to secure that support was to address squarely the root causes of the problems and to express its views on controversial issues, such as production and consumption patterns and trade and development. Its decisions and recommendations should therefore be made more specific, although important guidelines and principles had been established. In that connection, Japan welcomed the Commission's decision to conduct an annual review of progress in the implementation of its decisions.

43. In the area of trade and development, Japan believed that trade and environment policies should be mutually supportive and that the methods of furthering environmental objectives through the international trade framework should be agreed upon on a multilateral basis. Japan therefore attached great importance to interaction between the Commission on Sustainable Development, the World Trade Organization and other relevant bodies such as UNCTAD and UNEP.

44. Since international partnership and national responsibility were the watchwords in efforts to implement the agreements reached in Rio, he emphasized the importance of countries sharing their different national experience in the implementation of Agenda 21. To that end, it would be useful to produce case studies of that experience and to submit the findings to the Commission on Sustainable Development. Ways of improving working methods must also be examined: less time should be spent on general debate and more should be devoted to the consideration of specific issues. One such issue was that of forests, with regard to which various commendable initiatives were being developed; those initiatives should be coordinated so that they complemented each other, as part of the preparatory work for the next session of the Commission.

45. It was also important to ensure the effectiveness of inter-sessional activities. In that connection, he was pleased that more specific mandates had been given to the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Finance and to the new Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Opened-ended Working Group on Sectoral Issues, whose work was to be completed before the next session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

46. In the area of finance, Malaysia and Japan planned to organize jointly another meeting of experts to try to identify the optimum mix of financial instruments for funding the various sectors as well as intersectoral activities. The two countries were working with Israel to organize a symposium on the integrated management of land and water resources. Its outcome would contribute to the consideration of sectoral issues at the next session of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development, which could continue to rely on Japan's cooperation in carrying out its important work.

47. Mr. GEORGE (Federated States of Micronesia) agreed with the views expressed by the representative of Australia on behalf of the countries of the South Pacific Forum and underscored the importance his country attached to the

progress made during the past year and the need for the Committee to ensure that progress continued. Upon being admitted to membership in the United Nations, the Federated States of Micronesia had become involved in activities related to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and was deeply appreciative of the consideration given to questions of interest to small island States. Now that the problems and their possible solutions had been defined and regulatory mechanisms established in a number of fields (such as the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Global Environment Facility), it was time for substantive action. In moving from negotiation to implementation, however, it should be borne in mind that those programmes were not just the old development processes dressed up in new clothing; they represented an entirely new approach, which linked environment and sustainable development as positive, complementary priorities that were equally important to both the North and the South. Implementing all the measures adopted so far would mean that assistance from the developed world to the developing world would increasingly take on the character of investment; consequently, those nations in possession of the resources required for the achievement of common goals must not hesitate to use them.

48. Regarding the Framework Convention on Climate Change, to which 94 States had already become parties, it would be extremely difficult to take effective steps to meet the threat of human-induced climate change without the universal participation of the international community. Small island States, which would be the first to be affected by global climate change, were confident that the first Conference of the Parties, to be held in Berlin in March 1995, would consider a proposed protocol to the Convention which would require specific reductions in the emission of greenhouse gases by developed countries according to a specific timetable; they also hoped that action of the kind required under the Alliance of Small Island States protocol would be initiated at the very outset of the Convention's implementation, recent scientific studies having shown that the gravity of the problem permitted no delay. The developing countries and particularly small island States must adopt a variety of measures to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change where those effects could not be avoided; in the case of islands and low-lying coastal areas, the threat lay in the possibility of sealevel rise. During the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee negotiations, some developed countries had expressed misgivings over the possible amount of adaptation costs, even though the Convention did provide for assistance to developing countries, especially the most vulnerable, in meeting those costs. His delegation was greatly encouraged by the outcome of discussions at the most recent meetings of that Committee, at which agreement had been reached on a three-stage approach that would bring greater certainty to the concept and lend confidence to future discussions on the matter.

49. A critical subject that still awaited detailed discussion by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee was the meaning of the term "incremental costs" as it appeared in the Convention. There was reason to fear that if the parties to the Convention delayed any longer the task of defining the term, it would be defined by default along very narrow lines by the interim financial mechanism. That should not be allowed to happen, since it would severely

restrict the participation of developing countries in projects designed to achieve Convention objectives.

50. Development was not a priority but a necessity for many island countries, among them his own. Any island country must examine carefully the prospect of substantial economic gain from outside ventures that were attracted for any reason, including geographic situation. But even development imperatives must be approached with the knowledge that those countries could not long survive if they did not protect their resources, especially their marine environment, the loss of which would lead to their ruin.

51. The Federated States of Micronesia was fully committed to the promotion of responsible fishing practices within its own exclusive economic zone and the zones of its neighbours in the Pacific region as well as in the contiguous high seas areas. Sustainable development of living marine resources could only be achieved through rational utilization and responsible fishing practices. In that connection, his Government supported the idea that outcome of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks should take the form of a binding legal document; it was also deeply concerned about the persistence of the destructive practice of large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing in some parts of the world, and joined in calling for full implementation of the global moratorium on the practice.

52. Coral reefs were another key element of the marine environment that must be preserved. Ocean water quality could itself become a threat to life if the precautionary principle was not strictly applied on a regional basis: coastal States should refrain from activities which might irretrievably pollute the water with toxic or radioactive substances.

53. He expressed his gratitude to the donor countries which had contributed to voluntary funds or made bilateral contributions; without their assistance his country's representatives would have been unable to attend many of the meetings on environment and development. He hoped the donors would continue to contribute to the funds to the extent necessary.

54. Miss MONTAÑO (Bolivia) recalled that the Rio Conference, at which the concept of sustainable development had come to the fore, had recognized that problems of environment and development were global in nature and that their solutions should also be global. The industrialized countries' environmental responsibilities and the right of all States to development had also been stressed. That had led to recognition of the absolute need for developing countries to have access to sufficient financial resources and appropriate technology in order to achieve the goals of equitable and sustainable development. She therefore urged the developed countries to make greater efforts to achieve the suggested goal of allocating 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance.

55. As a result of the Rio Conference, a Ministry of Sustainable Development and the Environment had been created in Bolivia which linked social and economic affairs; it incorporated two new components, the sustainable use of natural

resources and institutional sustainability, and functioned as the governing body of the planning system, which covered both national planning and natural resource management.

56. Efforts to achieve long-term sustainability in her country focused on four key areas: the economic sphere, in order to integrate the country into international markets; the social sphere, in order to redefine development in terms of equity based on a redistribution of wealth; the environmental sphere, to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources, and the political sphere, in order to promote the transition from a representative democracy to a participatory democracy. The new model of sustainable development required changes in the factors of development, production and consumption: the difficulty lay in society's low level of commitment, owing to social factors. The application of the new model required the support of financial resources to respond to the pressures of the most vulnerable groups in society, in order to enable society to be more receptive to the transition; in that context, education and communications and strategies to facilitate sectoral and multilateral coordination and cooperation must play a fundamental role.

57. Lastly, she urged the international community, when establishing economic and social policies, to honour the commitments adopted at the Rio Conference and underscored the need to consolidate and strengthen the Commission on Sustainable Development, to which end she favoured broad participation by the competent authorities in the high-level segment of the Commission, which should help to strengthen international cooperation. She referred in that connection to the proposal by her country to host a meeting in 1996 of the presidents of countries in the hemisphere to deal with sustainable development.

58. Mr. MOJOUKHOV (Belarus) welcomed the initial implementation of Agenda 21 at the regional level and of the Barbados Programme of Action and Declaration, as well as the entry into force of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa. He agreed with the representative of the Russian Federation that the Commission on Sustainable Development should maintain closer working relations with regional commissions, in particular, with the regional commissions of the United Nations.

59. With regard to the preparations for the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, he proposed that it should consider the possibility of elaborating an international convention on the protection and regeneration of forests on the basis of the Rio principles concerning forests and inter-sessional negotiations. He was also in favour of forging a new global solidarity which should be based on principles 6, 12 and 27 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, but without losing sight of the regional perspective. It was essential to make progress towards global sustainable development. However, that would require the support of the countries of central and eastern Europe, in particular, the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

60. The States in transition were striving to restructure their societies, and it was therefore extremely important to establish a foundation for sustainable development from the outset, by introducing environmentally rational models of production and consumption, macroeconomic policies which respected the environment and micro-economic policies which included indicators to measure sustainable development. His country was one of the most environmentally vulnerable countries in transition and it faced serious obstacles on its path towards sustainable development, since the pressing need to emerge from its economic crisis did not permit it adequately to confront environmental problems, such as those resulting from the accident at Chernobyl. His country had ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1993 but was not yet in a position to implement it. However, the most complex problems had been those involving the execution of industrial reconversion projects and the implementation of international agreements on the reduction of conventional and nuclear weapons. Other countries of the region were in a similar position. Accordingly, there was an undeniable need to join forces to prevent the crisis in central and eastern Europe from exerting an impact at the global level.

61. His country had proposed that in 1996 the United Nations should convene an international conference on sustainable development in the countries with economies in transition, in which the participation of the Economic Commission for Europe, the Regional Office for Europe of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other international bodies and organizations would be important. The conference should be open to observers from other States and international institutions.

62. As to the details of the proposal, he wished to provide the following clarifications: first, his country would like a constructive debate on the proposal to be held during the current session of the Second Committee and believed that the matter should be resolved no later than at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. The proposal did not rule out other possibilities, such as the convening during the coming two or three years of other international conferences on global or sectoral development issues, such as reconversion or interregional projects for South-South cooperation. In addition, the proposed conference could serve as the preparatory forum for a special session of the General Assembly devoted to monitoring the implementation of Agenda 21.

63. Secondly, the objective of the proposed conference should not be to formulate a general multisectoral programme of action, since an environmental protection programme for central and eastern Europe already had been adopted at the Lucerne Conference on Environment for Europe (Lucerne, 1993). Moreover, it should be emphasized that Europe had gained experience in cooperation to resolve environmental, social and economic problems outside the United Nations system. The countries with economies in transition, for their part, also had acquired experience at the interregional and subregional levels, particularly within the general framework of cooperation with the European Union, the countries of the Visegrad Group, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Central European Initiative. In the United Nations system, certain bodies and programmes had

carried out activities in that field, in particular, the Economic and Social Council, the Committee on Science and Technology for Development, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Committee on Natural Resources, the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development, UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), UNCTAD, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Environment Fund and, also within the United Nations system, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. These and other efforts must be coordinated in order to derive maximum benefit from available resources.

64. Thirdly, with regard to preparations for the conference, the United Nations could serve as a catalyst and as the coordinating body. Looking ahead to the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, his delegation would like the following to occur: the Secretary-General should submit a report on sustainable development in the countries with economies in transition, the Commission on Sustainable Development should prepare a study on the implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in the region, UNEP should assess the impact of the global environmental situation on the central and eastern European region, the Economic Commission for Europe should develop regional cooperation programmes and the United Nations system should elaborate programmes for the coordination of international cooperation for sustainable development to complement the programme adopted at Lucerne in 1993.

65. Fourthly, in addition to the question of coordination, which also should be taken up at the Conference, there were other important issues, including the implementation of the GLOBE initiative (Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment), participation in the monitoring of global environmental problems, cooperation between the countries with economies in transition and the developing countries in areas of common interest, in particular, the exchange of ecologically sound technologies and experience in the field of sustainable development. His country was particularly interested in a project to improve the environment in Soligorsk and in the Minsk region, in which the World Environment Fund could participate.

66. Fifthly, the countries with economies in transition themselves could assume partial responsibility for the financing of and preparations for the conference. A portion of the costs could be covered by their contributions in their national currencies to UNEP and UNDP and by voluntary contributions from non-governmental donors. The cost of conference services and other services could be borne as far as possible by interested regional and subregional institutions concerned with cooperation.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.